



RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY

Guidance for the education of Looked After Children (LAC)

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy. The Academy Council will review the policy annually, unless there are significant legislative changes in the interim period.

Version:	V3
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Revision History:

Version:	Date:	Author:
V0.3	March 2022	Reshma Bharakhada (Lead Safeguarding Officer)
V0.3	September 2024	Vicky Barwell (Principal) and Andrew Curran (Designated Teacher for LAC)

Introduction

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health and/or development, ensuring that children grow up with safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to grow and flourish.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcome

Nationally, children who are looked after significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Looked After Children are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing. Helping Looked After Children succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Rushey Mead Academy.

Objectives

The objective of this policy is to promote the educational achievement and welfare of looked after children who attend Rushey Mead Academy. This policy incorporates requirements set out within:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (Updated July 2022)*^[4]
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) Department for Education*^[5]
- *Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2023)*^[6]
- *Ofsted Non-association independent school inspection handbook (September 2019)*¹
- *Ofsted Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings (September 2019)*²
- *DfE Governance Handbook, (March 2019)*³
- *Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium, Rev 2020)*⁴
- *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (March 2015)*⁵

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335964/Promoting_the_educational_achievement_of_looked_after_children_Final_23.....pdf

The Name of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children in our school is:

Andrew Curran

The name of the Academy Councillor, to support the named teacher for Looked After Children in our school is:

Kalvinder Kumar

This guidance will be renewed annually by Rushey Mead Academy to ensure we are providing the best possible outcomes for the Looked After Children in our School.

Who are Looked After Children?

¹ [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children)

^[2] [Keeping children safe in education 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828763/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf)

^[3] [Education inspection framework for September 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-for-september-2023)

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-schools-inspection-handbook-eif>

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828763/Inspecting_safeguarding_in_early_years_education_and_skills.pdf

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788234/governance_handbook_2019.pdf

⁷ <https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Sept%202019.pdf>

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They may fall into one of four main groups. Children may be accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20). They may be the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38). Children can be the subject of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46). They may also be compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21). The term **'in care'** refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are **'accommodated'** by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be **'Looked After Children'** - LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Looked after children and previously looked after children.

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Academy Councils should ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe. In particular, they should ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They should also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The designated teacher for LAC and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group. A child who is looked after by a local authority (referred to as a looked-after-child) as defined in section 22 Children Act 1989, means a child who is subject to a care order (interim or full care order) or who is voluntarily accommodated by the local authority. In maintained schools and academies, the designated safeguarding lead should work closely with the designated teacher.

All Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require.

At Rushey Mead Academy we are committed to enhancing the achievement and welfare of Looked After Children in the following ways:

- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based curriculum.
- Recording, monitoring, and improving the academic achievement of the child in addition to their health and wellbeing.
- Achieving stability and continuity.
- Promoting attendance.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- Promoting good communication between all those involved in the child's life and listening to the child.
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Looked After Children.
- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Looked After children.

The role of the Academy Councillor is to:

- Ensure that the school provides a good framework of support for LAC attending the school.
- Follow the relevant statutory guidance.
- Appoint a suitably qualified teacher with the necessary experience and status as the designated teacher for LAC as per *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021*.
- Ensure the designated teacher receives the full support needed to carry out their role effectively, including training and development opportunities so that they are able to increase their knowledge and understanding
- Ensure adequate time and resources are made available for the designated teacher to carry out their duties
- Ensure the designated teacher has opportunities to disseminate knowledge and information to other staff members so that the school environment is one that supports and continually monitors the effectiveness of school policies and the role of the designated teacher on outcomes for LAC pupils via an annual report provided by the designated teacher
- Act on any concerns raised by the designated teacher or arising from any other source with regard to promoting the education of LAC.

The Role of the Designated Teacher is to:

- Promote a culture within the school whereby staff have a good understanding of the specific educational needs of LAC and the barriers they face.
- Ensure that LAC are not disadvantaged under school policies by contributing to the development and review of school policies that actively support the education of LAC.
- Ensure LAC have a dedicated mentor within the school who can offer them support.
- Foster a culture of high expectations for LAC in staff and help raise the aspirations of looked after children.
- Be responsible for the oversight of the development and monitoring of PEPs within the school and setting targets for LAC.
- Liaise with social workers and Virtual Schools regarding individual children regarding their PEP and any associated issues with their learning.
- Develop a good understanding of care planning and how the PEP fits into the wider picture of the child's care.
- Promote best practice in helping LAC learn and achieve and helping staff to assess children's preferred learning styles and consider appropriate teaching strategies.
- Disseminate information to staff on how to provide effective support to individual looked after

children in order to maximise their opportunities.

- Identify additional learning opportunities and resources for LAC.
- Help LAC become involved in the PEP planning process and ensure the '*voice of the child*' and their views are taken into account.
- Liaise with and report annually to the board of governors on outcomes for LAC.
- Liaise with carers to support home learning and ensure that they have all the login details for Satchel: One and the school gateway.
- Oversee transitions of LAC to and from the school and transfer of information to the advocate for LAC and pursue all resources and educational opportunities on their behalf.
- Identify any barriers to learning and work with the virtual school and carers to overcome these. An example of this is a child not having a computer/laptop to complete their homework.
- Ensure that any LAC child is given the opportunity to attend trips and set targets via the PEP to ensure the virtual school pay 50% towards the trip.

The roll of all staff

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Looked After Children, as for all pupils.
- Maintain Looked After Children's confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Looked After Children.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Looked After Children.
- Work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

The role of the foster carer is to:

- Support the child's education and encourage them to achieve.
- Liaise with the child's social worker to agree tasks and areas of responsibility relating to the child's education.
- Contribute to the development and review of the child's PEP.
- Be the main point of contact for the school on a day to day basis and sign the home school agreement.
- Support the child to attend school regularly and engage in school activities and ensure adequate support at home for the child to carry out homework.
- Carry out any allocated tasks relating to the child's education and fulfilment of the corporate parenting role as set out in the child's placement plan.
- Attend parent's evenings and school performances that the child is involved in.
- Receive training and support that enables them to engage effectively with the education system and advocate for the child.
- Take an active interest in the child's education and provide a home environment that actively encourages learning.
- Ensure the child has access to books and materials to support their education.
- Ensure homework and revision is completed.
- Promote regular school attendance and good behaviour.
- Liaise with the school to deal with any arising issues.

Rushey Mead Academy understands its responsibilities in supporting and encouraging the educational development and achievement of LAC. In addition to allocating a named Designated Teacher for LAC and Governor for LAC, we work closely with the Virtual Schools Team to ensure we are fulfilling requirements as set out by the Local Authority.

Virtual School Team

The role of the Virtual school team involves working with a wide range of professionals to improve the educational outcomes, and therefore the life chances, of all Looked After Children, young people and care leavers for whom Leicester City Council and other Local Authorities is the corporate parent.

Aims of the Virtual School Team

- Promote the emotional well-being and educational achievement of all the children and young people in the care of Leicester City Council and other Local Authorities;
- Encourage a deeper understanding of the issues facing children and young people who have experienced separation and loss and how this impacts upon attainment and achievement;
- Improve and maintain excellent school attendance;
- Work with schools to avoid exclusions;
- Work with schools, carers and the young people to raise attainment and accelerate progress;
- Encourage young people to participate in a range of activities in and out of school relevant to their interests and abilities;
- Promote effective multi-agency working that benefits all looked after children and young people.

Partners include:

- Carers
- Social workers
- Schools
- Independent Reviewing Officers
- Residential children's homes
- Youth Offending Service
- Special Education Service
- Education Welfare Service
- Educational Psychology Service
- Raising Achievement Team
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Admission and Exclusion team
- The Heritage Panel
- Leicester City Football Club

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

PEP is a mechanism for promoting and prioritising the education of young people in public care and is a statutory requirement. Rushey Mead Academy ensures that there is a PEP for every LAC in our school, and we ensure that PEPs are revisited and reviewed 3 times each year - once in each school term. The planning process for PEP meetings will be carried out in collaboration between our school, the social worker, the carer, the young person and the Virtual School Team. The designated person for LAC in our school, Sarah Harriman will ensure regular meetings take place and that they are the single point of contact for all Looked after children in our school.

Rushey Mead Academy completes all PEPs on an online template using Local Authority Procedures and will seek advice from the Virtual Schools Team as necessary.

The designated teacher and deputy for looked after children will work with the Virtual school team in ensuring all PEPS are completed to a very high standard taking into consideration the child's voice.